



News Release from Congressman

ROB SIMMONS

SECOND DISTRICT, CONNECTICUT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
TUESDAY, JULY 25, 2006

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SIMMONS TAKES FINAL STEP TO PROVIDING FEDERAL PROTECTION OF EIGHTMILE RIVER

Simmons-Dodd-Lieberman Bill Will Designate River As "Wild And Scenic"

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Rep. Rob Simmons, R-2nd District, today joined Sens. Chris Dodd and Joe Lieberman in introducing legislation to designate the Eightmile River as part of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System – guaranteeing federal protection of the beautiful scenery and important ecosystem.

"Today we are taking an important final step toward protecting one of Connecticut's important environmental treasures," Simmons said. "This legislation is necessary to finalize a long-standing goal of mine – providing federal Wild and Scenic status to our Eightmile River."

The Simmons-Dodd-Lieberman legislation is a necessary follow-up to earlier legislation authored by Simmons and the two Senators. On Jan. 3, 2001, Simmons introduced H.R. 182 the "Eightmile River Wild and Scenic River Study Act of 2001," which required the U.S. Department of the Interior to issue a study on adding the river to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. H.R. 182 passed the House unanimously in May 2001 and was signed into law by President Bush on Nov. 6, 2001. The Interior Dept. is expected to release its study sometime later this summer.

Today's legislation takes the next step in the Wild and Scenic status process. The bill asks the U.S. Interior Secretary to designate Eightmile River as "wild and scenic" – thus giving the river federal protection to preserve their free flowing condition and water quality and to fulfill other conservation purposes. Every member of Connecticut's congressional delegation is a cosponsor of the Simmons-Dodd-Lieberman legislation.

The National Park Service, in conjunction with the Nature Conservancy and the Eightmile River Study Committee, has completed a river management plan, while the towns of Salem, East Haddam and Lyme voted overwhelmingly to approve the management plan required for designation.

Simmons concluded, "This bipartisan, bicameral legislation takes the final, important step toward finally granting Wild and Scenic status to one of Connecticut great environmental treasures – the Eightmile River. I've been proud to have worked with Sens. Dodd and Lieberman, the entire Connecticut congressional delegation and the local environmental and town leaders on this designation."

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